

PLOW DRIVERS NEED YOUR RESPECT AND COOPERATION

Snow plow operators are experiencing more and more accidents and close calls with the same people and vehicles they are trying to help.

The modern plow trucks are great machines, equipped with a front plow (12' wide), side wing plow (9' wide), a computer-controlled salt/liquid de-icing material spreader, LED Lights, and mirrors in many places to help operators see all sides of their equipment. A fully equipped and loaded tri-axle plow truck weighs in at over 60,000 pounds, measures 21' wide with the wing plow down, 38' long, and 13' tall.

The people who operate these trucks in all types of weather, both by day and by night, are tasked with a very challenging duty. They basically climb aboard, plow/salt and plow/salt until the storm is over. Many times the roads are snow covered and slippery. At times visibility is zero and temps are subzero. They can be required to work around the clock for several days with a standard work policy of 16 hours on duty and 6 hours off between shifts.

A typical Dodge County highway snow plow route is 17 miles long or 34 lane miles. It may take 2 hours or more for a truck to make one pass through the route.

Freezing rain, wind, and heavy snow are some of the challenges nature delivers for these operators. They are part of the job and cannot be controlled. However, there are other challenges of the human nature that **can** be addressed and hopefully minimized or eliminated. Some of the common concerns plow operators face are:

- Motorists driving too fast for conditions. **Slow down when it's slippery.**
- Motorists following too closely behind the truck. In many cases vehicles are so close the operator cannot see them in their mirrors. Operators need to be able to safely back up and reposition the truck several times to adequately clear an intersection. Vehicles in their blind spots or following too closely are a hazard. **Stay back 200 feet and allow the operators to safely do their job.**
- Bright lights. **Please dim your high beam headlights whether you are approaching a plow truck or following a truck.**
- Drivers passing plow trucks under slippery conditions. **This is not recommended unless the truck is doing shoulder/ditch winging and the pavement is dry.**
- At times the operators encounter vehicles approaching them with snow and ice covering the windshield. **Clear your entire windshield, side windows, and mirrors to provide safe visibility in all directions.**

- Distracted driving is a growing concern. **Please hang up and drive, especially during snow and ice events.**

These operators need respect, consideration, and cooperation to do their jobs safely and successfully.

Hours of coverage during storms vary by class of road.

Class 1 roads receive 24-hour service. Class 1 roads are I 41, USH 151, STH 60 from STH 67 to Hartford, STH 26 from STH 60 to Watertown, and STH 33 from Beaver Dam to the east county line.

Class 2 roads receive coverage from 4:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Class 2 roads are STH 73 from STH 33 to Columbus, STH 33 from STH 73 to Beaver Dam, STH 16/60 and 60 from Columbus to STH 67, STH 26 from STH 60 to Waupun, and all of STH 68, 175, 28, 67, and 49.

All County roads receive coverage from 4:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

It should be everyone's goal to:

- Minimize traveling in poor weather conditions.
- Allow additional travel time if travelling is required.
- Slow down to a safe speed based on conditions.
- Dim your high beam headlights when approaching or following snow plowing equipment.
- Follow snow removal equipment at a safe distance -- 200' is the recommended minimum distance.
- Never pass a plow truck on a slippery road.
- Give consideration to plow operators at all times. Please do not pull out in front of them from a stop sign at an intersection. These trucks are heavy and do not stop as quickly as your car or light truck can.

Please consider these safety goals next time it snows and every time it snows. It will be appreciated by snow plow operators everywhere.